1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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which make up the *efu*. The Nupe house consists of a number of huts, mostly round, built of clay and thatched with grass, which are surrounded by a high mud wall. The wall opens upon the path or open space in front of the house in the *katamba*, a hut more spacious than the rest, with big doors which make the *katamba* a gateway or entrance-hall of the compound. Inside the house are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba*, all invisible from outside. You only see the tops of the grass roofs protruding from behind the compound wall. Sometimes the house of a chief is built in a different, more imposing style with a large square or semicircular *katamba* which has a high gabled roof and windows let into the walls. Often huts or entrance-halls are decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Some houses are more beautifully decorated than others—a sign both of difference in prosperity and in ambition or aesthetic leanings. There are the signs of occupational specialization: one or two blacksmiths' furnaces; a house decorated with crude plastics in relief of animals, or with a pair of horns surmounting the roof—a hunter's place; a platform of dyeing pits in one corner of the village, and perhaps the half-open sheds of the weavers. To-day one small mosque at least is found in every village of Nupe. Pagan sacred shrines or sacrifice places are mostly hidden inside the houses; only in the riverain villages did I find a sacred shrine placed in the open, in the middle of the village. The sacred groves where the annual sacrifices are performed are always some distance away from the village, hidden in the thin bush and brushwood which surround the village. Most villages are situated near a watercourse, be it only a little stream or brook. From here the women fetch the water, and here you may see them at all hours of the day washing dishes and calabashes or laundering their clothes. There are also wells in most of the villages, well-dug deep wells—the Nupe are excellent well-builders—with a strong timber framework and a solid, clean platform round the mouth of the shaft; standing on the platform, the women draw water in buckets or earthenware pots tied to long ropes of native hemp. The big, round roasting-ovens of clay which look like huge red eggs scattered on the outside of the village, and in the bigger places the square of open booths which forms the market, complete the picture of the Nupe village. Once or twice a week this square is overflowing with people, men and women of all ages: they buy and sell, they listen or dance to the music of drummers and flute-players, they have their heads shaved, they talk, chat, cry out their wares. They are a mixed crowd, and the nearer the village is to the main roads of the country, the more mixed it is: people from the village, peasants from the *tunga* near-by, traders from Bida, travellers and occasional visitors from places and countries far away.

The market gathering is not the village community. Yet the boundary of what we have called the area of common life is, of necessity, fluid. It is redrafted and reset with every new bond of contact and every new channel of communication. But we may say this: the village and its dependencies form the core of this area of common life. Between them takes place the intensive life of the community, of regular and habitual co-operation in all spheres of life. Within this area marriages are arranged,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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diameter, they are built of clay, with strong, thick walls. Over the dome-like top a grass roof is placed as protection from sun and rain. The granary is raised above the ground, resting on stones or solid blocks of clay, to make it safe from termites. On one side, a little above the middle, is a rectangular opening which can be closed completely with a clay lid. At the beginning of the rainy season you will see the people everywhere busy repairing their granaries, or building new ones, which are to take the new crop. Later, when they have been filled, the lid is closed, and the granaries then left until their contents are required for food or sale.

Millet and sorghum are stored unthreshed, in whole heads. They keep remarkably well in these granaries. The method of storing unthreshed grain ensures a certain measure of ventilation and also prevents the grain from being packed too tightly in the granary, and thus becoming damp and mouldy.[1] As already mentioned, late millet and sorghum are left to dry on the fields for a few days before being taken home to be stored. Bulrush-millet, which is reaped during the rains, may have to be dried in special roast ovens before it is fit for storing. These ovens, *yaku*, which are used for various purposes besides the drying of millet—soap-making and the drying of shea-nuts—are built of clay, of roughly cylindrical shape, about 5 feet high and 3 feet wide, and are divided into half horizontally by a sieve-like grill. The bottom part of the oven takes the fuel (firewood), the upper half, which is open at the top, is the receptacle for the stuff to be dried or roasted. Frequently a small grass roof is put up over the oven to provide shade for the women working there. Every Nupe village possesses a large number of these ovens. They are placed outside the compounds, often on the outskirts of the village. They are not the property of individual households, but are built by the men of the village or village section in collective work, and used by the women—the drying and roasting being their work.

The seed plants are as a rule at once divided up from the crop. The seed yams are stored on the farm—unless yam is planted immediately after the harvest. The heads of millet, sorghum, and maize which are later to supply the seeds are stored, not in the granaries, but in the hut of the family head, where they are kept on a shelf of bamboo or wood underneath the roof.

The crops undergo no further treatment during the time of storage. As mentioned already, the Nupe do not dry yam.[2] Sorghum and millet are not threshed until the grain is being prepared for cooking or sale, although heads of unthreshed grain, packed in large bundles, are also offered for sale on the markets. The threshing is done in the courtyard

[1] This is actually the almost universal method of grain storage in Northern Nigeria. An indirect testimony to its efficacy I chanced to obtain from Hausa settlers in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan whom I had occasion to visit in 1939. Chiefly for lack of proper building material for the construction of the Nigerian type of clay granary, these settlers have adopted the Sudan method of storage, i.e. storage of threshed grain. They all agreed that this method was inferior to the Nigerian, and preserved the grain much less satisfactorily.

[2] It is interesting to note that the Nupe colonies in Yoruba country and the Nupe communities which are living side by side with Yoruba communities in Ilorin Province have adopted the drying of yam.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

hand, are hardly larger than a *tunga* (see below). An *ezi* used to be encircled by a large wall, the ruins of which can still be seen in many places, which formed a protection from the dangers of war. Some Nupe villages of to-day have sprung from the amalgamation of smaller groups, fusing for purposes of protection against Fulani raiders.

To-day there is at least one small mosque in every Nupe settlement except in the riverain villages, while pagan shrines are concealed in the houses. All settlements have good wells and round roasting-ovens of red clay. A square of open booths forms the market. To the west of every village is an open space (*finzo*) where corn is threshed.

An *ezi* usually has several *tunga* settlements or hamlets; Kutigi, for example, has six, founded between 1860 and 1910. The *tunga* are much smaller "daughter settlements" or "colonies" of the *ezi*. They seldom consist of more than three family groups (*emi*—see p. 31 above); they are less permanent than the "real" village, and lack the religious and ancestral bonds which tie a village to its locality. They have no separate markets or age-sets. *Tunga* settlements have been formed by groups moving out into the bush in search of new farmland; they are always referred to as the *tunga* of a certain *ezi* and rarely, if ever, develop into villages themselves. Close contact, intermarriage, and new emigration link a *tunga* with its *ezi*.

The ward (*efu*) is a sector of a large village or town and is made up of a number of compounds; except in some riverside villages they are often separated from each other by stretches of open land or cultivated fields studded with clumps of trees. Each *efu* has its own name, derived from a topographical peculiarity or a sociological feature, or from the origin of the inhabitants. The number of *efu* in an *ezi* varies; the old city of Bida had four, Doko has five.

The walled compound or "house" (*emi*), already mentioned with reference to its occupants, consists of a number of huts, mostly round, with very thin walls of clay and grass-thatched roofs. The high mud wall surrounding the *emi* opens upon a path or open space where there is a gateway or entrance hall to the compound, consisting of a larger hut known as *katamba*. The *katamba* is used as a meeting place for the men, as a guest house for strangers, or for the carrying out of part-time industries such as mat- or net-making. Within the *emi* are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba* invisible from the outside. A chief sometimes has a larger and more imposing *katamba* with a high gabled roof and windows. Huts and entrance hall are often decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Signs of occupational specialization, such as a blacksmith's furnace, are sometimes found. A man and each of his wives has a separate hut.

Granaries (*edo*) which stand among the living-huts in the compound, are egg-shaped, raised off the ground, about 7 ft. high and 4 ft. in diameter, with thick clay walls and a grass roof. The opening is about halfway up one side and has a clay lid. There are also cylindrical ovens, 5 ft. high and 3 ft. wide, for drying bulrush millet and shea-nuts, and for making soap, outside the compound. These are communal property, owned by the women.

The Political System[3]

The political organization of the Nupe is centralized under the *Etsu* Nupe, who is the highest title-holder in a nobility graded by precedence but within which there is provision for promotion. Little is known of the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times, though some features from the ancient Nupe system doubtless survive in the original Nupe dynasty at Patigi. In former times there were ritual taboos in conformity with which the *Etsu* wore only white, ate food prepared only by his wives, and might not be seen eating by any stranger. The *ndakó gboyá* cult[4] for

[3] Nadel, 1942, pp. 87–91.
[4] See below, pp. 48–9.